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Pilgrimage of Trust from Kigali to Rome

A stage of the "pilgrimage of trust on earth" was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 14-18 November 2012. It was the third African stage after Johannesburg, South Africa (1995) and Nairobi, Kenya (2008). Participants in the meeting came from all over Rwanda, from the Great Lakes region of East Africa and beyond—more than 8500 young people from 35 countries, welcomed in 4000 families.

From Kigali, two of my brothers and I went to Goma, North Kivu, just as upheavals were causing tens of thousands of displaced families to flood into the region.

Rwanda has been through a period of great suffering. Memories remain alive; wounds are still open. But the country is getting back on its feet. We admire those who bring compassion and healing, for example by taking care of orphans as if they were their own children.

What we have brought back from Rwanda is above all the call to reconciliation. The Church wants to contribute to an in-depth reconciliation, not a forced coexistence but a reconciliation of hearts. This is a call for all of us: how can we reconcile what seems to be, and perhaps is, incompatible? We are not doomed to resignation or passivity, because Christ came to reconcile what seemed to be in permanent opposition.

In Goma, under extraordinary circumstances, in the face of immense distress and often utter destitution, we met peacemakers and witnesses to love. Because of their faith they remain on their feet amidst chaos, fear and abandonment. We keep before our eyes the image of a Church that remains a place of welcome, even when no other structures function.

I remain impressed by the vitality of young Christians in Africa. This dynamism is a kind of Gospel encouragement to stand firm in hope.

The European meeting in Rome was an opportunity for young adults from across Europe and beyond to reflect together on the wellsprings of faith, to pray in the major Roman basilicas, to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostles and to the catacombs, to discover a local Church where the faith has been passed down from one generation to the next for two thousand years. On the second day of the meeting, 45,000 young Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants gathered in Saint Peter's Square for a time of prayer with Pope Benedict XVI—a simple prayer, with the songs of Taizé, the reading of the Word of God and a long period of silence. Then, under a full moon which had just risen, the square was illuminated by tens of thousands of candles that each person held in their hand as a sign of resurrection; finally, the participants listened to the Pope's message.

If 2012 has made us particularly attentive to young Africans, in 2013 we will be listening to young Asians: in October–November, a few of us will make a pilgrimage to several countries with stops in Seoul, Korea, then in Vasai and Mumbai, India. And we shall also go to express solidarity in countries aspiring to greater justice and freedom.

We began the year 2013 by going to Istanbul, with one hundred young adults, to celebrate Epiphany with the ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew and Christians of different Churches in that city. Having come from 25 different countries and from several denominations, it was important for us to discover that we have roots in that place. Our faith was expressed in the Creed formulated there. There too, some of the Church fathers opened the Christian faith to a culture unfamiliar with the Bible. Today, the Christians of Istanbul live as a minority in a society where Christianity has become peripheral. They are a sign of the light of the Epiphany that shines in the world and for the whole of creation, beginning from the humble grotto of Bethlehem.

The Letter published last year in Berlin, "Towards a New Solidarity" (available on www.taize.fr), will continue to support our searching during the coming three years. We are devoting the year 2013 to finding ways of "uncovering the wellsprings of trust in God." The "Year of Faith" launched by Pope Benedict XVI points us in this direction. Here are four proposals to help us go further with our searching.

f. Alois

Uncovering the Wellsprings of Trust in God

First Proposal

TALK TOGETHER ABOUT OUR FAITH JOURNEY

What is the meaning of our lives? How do we deal with suffering and death? Where do we find life-giving joy?

These are questions that every generation and every person is called upon to answer.

The answers cannot be contained in ready-made formulas.

"And if God exists...?" The question of God has not vanished from the horizon, but the way it is asked has changed radically.

The fact that individuality is central in our age has a positive side: it enhances the value of the human person, human freedom and autonomy.

Even in societies where religion is very present, trust in God is less and less self-evident; it requires a personal decision.

"God dwells in unapproachable light. No human being has ever seen or can see God" (1 Timothy 6:16). These words of the apostle Paul are still very relevant today. What consequences can we draw from them?

Let us search together, talking about this with other believers, agnostics or atheists! The dividing-line between faith and doubt passes through believers as well as non-believers.
When those who seek God are less affirmative in expressing their faith, that does not mean that they believe less, but rather that they are very aware of God's transcendence. They refuse to imprison God in concepts.

If nobody can see God, then how could the early Christians say that in Jesus we see God? "He is the image of the invisible God," writes the same apostle Paul (Colossians 1:15).

Jesus is one with God, true God and true man, without separation or mixture. How many struggles have been waged in the course of history to refine the meaning of these paradoxical expressions of the mystery of God! They do not take the place of our own searching; they are markers along the way.

By all he is and does, Jesus shows that God is love. He reveals the heart of God. God is not arbitrary power, but the One who loves us.

The early Christians testified that Jesus rose from the dead and that he is in God. And he comes to set God's life, like a treasure, in the hearts of those he meets. And that treasure is itself a personal presence; it bears the name "Holy Spirit", who comforts and encourages.

The names "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" indicate that God is communion, relationship, dialogue, love... so that the three are only one. Thus the Christian faith contains such a great paradox that we can never become masters of truth.

MAY

DAILY READINGS

1 Ps 26
Wed Examine me, Lord, test my heart and my mind; for your faithful love is before my eyes, and I live my life by your truth.

2 Jn 14:27-31
Thu Jesus said to his disciples: Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. You heard me say: "I am going away and I will return to you." If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

3 Col 1:24-28
Fri God has wanted to reveal to the nations the splendid riches of the mystery which is Christ in you.

4 Is 42:10-17
Sat The Lord says: I shall lead my people by a road that is unknown to them. Before them I shall turn the darkness into light.

5 Jn 14:22-26
SUN Jesus said: Peace I leave you; my peace I give you. A peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

6 Ep 3:7-12
Mon Paul writes: Through our faith in Christ Jesus, we can approach God with complete confidence.

7 1 K 8:22-40
Tue Solomon prayed: Listen, Lord, forgive and act; deal with every person according to all they do, since you know their heart — you alone know the heart of everyone.

8 1 Jn 3:14-20
Wed Let us not love just with words and in speech, but with actions and in truth.

9 Lk 24:35-48
Thu ASCENSION
The Risen Christ said to the apostles: This is what is written: The Christ will suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day. And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations.

10 Jn 14:1-10
Fri Jesus said: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

11 Is 66:18-21
Sat The Lord says: I am coming to gather the people of every nation and language, and they will see my glory.

12 Jn 17:20-26
SUN Jesus prayed for his disciples, saying: Father, may they be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me. May they be so perfected in unity that the world will recognise that it was you who sent me and that you have loved them as you have loved me.

13 Ep 2:4-6
Mon Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our sins.

14 Mt 6:7-15
Tue Jesus said: Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

15 Is 26:7-9
Wed My soul longs for you in the night, Lord, and deep within me, my spirit seeks you.

16 Jn 20:11-18
Thu The Risen Christ said to Mary of Magdala: Go and find my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

17 Lk 24:46-53
Fri After Jesus' ascension, the disciples returned to Jerusalem full of joy, and they were continually in the Temple praising God.

18 Ep 1:1-14
Sat In Christ, we have been marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit; this is the pledge for us of the freedom of the people whom God has taken for his own, to the praise of his glory.

19 Jn 14:15-21
SUN PENTECOST
Jesus said: I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor who will stay with you for ever — the Spirit of truth.

20 Ac 15:5-12
Mon Peter said: God, who knows human hearts, showed that he accepts all people by giving the Holy Spirit to all who believe.

21 Mt 20:20-28
Tue Jesus said: Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant.

22 Ac 8:1-8
Wed The believers who had been scattered during the persecution went from place to place proclaiming the good news of the Gospel.

23 Lk 12:4-12
Thu Jesus said to his disciples: When you are placed under accusation, do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say, because when the time comes, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say.

24 1 Co 12:4-11
Fri In each person the Holy Spirit manifests its action for the good of all.

25 Am 8:11
Sat The days are coming, says the Lord, when I shall send hunger upon the land; not hunger for food or thirst for water, but a hunger to hear the Word of God.

26 Jn 16:12-15
SUN Jesus said: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking of his own accord but will say only what he has been told.

27 Rm 8:14-17
Mon Paul writes: You did not receive a spirit which makes you a slave to fear again; you received the spirit of adoption by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

28 Jr 1:4-8
Tue God said to Jeremiah: Go to everyone I send you to. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you.

29 Ps 105:1-5
Wed Seek God and his strength, seek God's face at all times. Remember the wonders God has done.

30 Ac 3:1-10
Thu Peter said to the crippled man, "I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!"

31 Rm 5:1-11
Fri While we were still powerless, at the time chosen by God, Christ died for those who were without God.

Holy Spirit, Spirit of compassion, you breathe in us upon what is fragile. You transfigure our impossibilities into trust, the confidence that you are at work in each one of us.

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God of compassion, you want no one to suffer, but you take upon yourself every human trial. As we attempt to love you, we want to be able, in our turn, to forgive over and over again.

JUNE
DAILY READINGS

1 Lk 22:28-34
Sat Jesus said to Peter: I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back to me, strengthen your brothers.

2 1 Co 11:23-26
SUN Paul writes: I received from the Lord what I passed on to you. Whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, you are proclaiming his death until he comes.

3 Jn 17:11-21
Mon Jesus prayed for his disciples, saying: Father, may they all be one, just as you are in me and I am in you, so that they may also be in us and the world may believe that you sent me.

4 Tt 3:4-7
Tue Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, God has generously poured out on us the Holy Spirit, so that justified by his grace we may be heirs in hope of eternal life.

5 Ac 5:27-42
Wed Glad to have had the honour of suffering for the name of Christ, the first disciples continued to teach and proclaim the good news of Christ Jesus, both in the temple and in people's homes.

6 Heb 8:6-13
Thu The Lord says: Among my people, no one will need to teach their neighbour, saying, "Know the Lord!", for they shall all know me, from the smallest among them to the greatest.

7 Ac 2:42-47
Fri All the believers held everything in common. They sold their goods and possessions and shared the proceeds according to the needs of each person.

8 Pr 23:15-19
Sat Let your heart remain constant in the adoration of God; for there is a future and your hope will not come to nothing.

9 Lk 7:11-17
SUN The people said of Jesus, "A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people."

10 Is 43:1-4a
Mon Thus says God who created you: Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name, you are mine.

11 1 P 4:7-11
Tue If anyone speaks, they should do so as one speaking the very words of God; if anyone serves, let it be as one fulfilling God's service, so that in everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ.

12 Rm 15:1-7,13
Wed St. Paul writes: We should not try to please ourselves, but consider what is good for our neighbours and so build up community.

13 Jr 20:7-9
Thu Jeremiah said: The word of the Lord has brought insult and derision upon me. And so I said to myself, "I shall not think about him, I shall no longer speak in his name." But there seemed to be a burning fire in my heart, which I could not contain.

14 Mt 26:36-46
Fri Jesus said to his disciples: Stay alert and pray in order to withstand the trial. The spirit is willing, but human nature is weak.

15 Jr 2:1-13
Sat The Lord says to his people: I remember the faithful love of your youth, when you followed me through the desert.

16 Lk 7:36-50
SUN Jesus said to a woman, "Your sins are forgiven." Those who were present began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

17 Rm 8:26-27
Mon We do not know how to pray properly, but the Spirit comes to help us in our weakness and intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

18 1 P 4:7-11
Tue Peter writes: Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over many a sin.

19 Mt 12:14-21
Wed Jesus fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah: My servant will not quarrel or cry out, he will not snuff out the smouldering wick. All the nations will put their hope in him.

20 1 Co 12:31—13:13
Thu Paul writes: Now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known.

21 Dt 32:8-11
Fri God finds his people in the desert, in a barren wasteland. God shields them and cares for them, guarding them as the apple of his eye.

22 Ac 13:23-25
Sat As John was completing his work, he said: Who do you think I am? I am not that one. No, but one is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

23 Lk 9:18-24
SUN Jesus said: Whoever wants to be a follower of mine must renounce themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

24 Is 49:1-6
Mon St JOHN THE BAPTIST The Lord says: It is not enough for you to be my servant to restore my people. I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the furthest corners of the earth.

25 Jl 3:1-5
Tue The Lord says: I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity.

26 1 Co 1:26-31
Wed God chose things that by human standards are weak to confound the strong. God chose what is lowly and despised in the eyes of the world.

27 Lk 12:22-31
Thu Jesus said: Do not be anxious about your life. Can any of you, by worrying about it, add a single moment to the length of your life?

28 1 P 4:7-11
Fri Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

29 2 Tm 4:6-18
Sat SS PETER AND PAUL Paul writes: I have fought the good fight to the end. I have run the race to the finish. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord will give me.

30 Lk 9:57-62
SUN Someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

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JULY

DAILY READINGS

1 Is 57:14-15
Mon God says: My home is a high and holy place, but I am with the humble and contrite to revive their spirit.

2 Rv 22:1-9
Tue The servants of God will see him face to face and God's name will be written on their foreheads. It will never be night again, and they will not need the light of a lamp or of the sun, because the Lord God will be shining upon them.

3 Ep 2:19-22
Wed St THOMAS
You are part of God's household. You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone.

4 Is 35:1-10
Thu The Lord says: The lame will leap like deer and the tongues of the dumb will shout for joy, for water will well up in the desert and the burning sand will become a pool.

5 Ezk 16:60-63
Fri The Lord says to his people: I shall re-establish my covenant with you and you will know that I am God. In your confusion you will be reduced to silence when I forgive you for everything you have done.

6 Mt 28:16-20
Sat Jesus, risen from the dead, appeared to his disciples and said: Go, make disciples of all nations. And surely I am with you always, to the end of time.

7 Lk 10:1-9
SUN Jesus sent out his disciples saying: Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you, cure the sick who are there and say, "The kingdom of God is very near you."

8 Si 2:1-11
Mon If you want to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials. Be sincere of heart and steadfast. Do not be alarmed by adversity, but attach yourself to the Lord and do not leave him.

9 Jn 6:27-29
Tue The people asked Jesus, "What must we do to do God's work?" Jesus replied, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

10 2 Co 6:1-10
Wed Paul writes: We are considered as sorrowful, we who are always rejoicing; as poor, we who make many people rich; as having nothing, we who possess everything.

11 Rm 10:11-13
Thu Paul writes: There is no difference between persons: all have the same Lord, who generously blesses all who call on him.

12 Si 27:30-28:7
Fri Forgive your neighbour any wrongs. For if someone nurses anger against another, how can they then ask for healing from God?

13 Is 58:6-8
Sat If you break unjust chains to let the oppressed go free, if you share your food with the hungry and shelter the homeless, then your light will break forth like the dawn and your wound will be quickly healed.

14 Lk 10:25-37
SUN Having told the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus asked, "Who showed themselves to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" They answered him, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

15 Ps 9
Mon Those who know your name trust in you, Lord. For you never forsake those who seek you.

16 Mt 6:25-34
Tue Jesus said: Seek first God's kingdom and his justice, and all other things will be given you in addition.

17 Ep 2:13-22
Wed In Christ, you are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by the Spirit.

18 Ps 86
Thu Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth. Give me an undivided heart that I may revere you.

19 1 Jn 4:7-11
Fri This is love: not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent his Son for the forgiveness of our sins.

20 Ga 5:13-14
Sat You were called to be free. Do not use your freedom for self-indulgence but to serve one another in love.

21 Lk 10:38-42
SUN Martha welcomed Jesus into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking.

22 1 Th 5:1-11
Mon You are children of light, children of the day. So let us not slumber but stay awake.

23 Rm 15:7-13
Tue May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

24 1 Jn 4:7-11
Wed Let us love one another, for love is of God and whoever loves is born of God and knows God.

25 Mt 20:24-28
Thu St JAMES
Jesus said: The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life for the ransom of many.

26 Ga 2:19-20
Fri Paul writes: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

27 Ph 2:1-11
Sat Paul writes: Be of the same mind, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing from selfish ambition. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus himself.

28 Lk 11:9-13
SUN Jesus said: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.

29 Ba 5:1-9
Mon Leave behind your sadness and put on for ever the beauty of God's glory. For the Lord will guide you in joy, with the mercy and saving justice that come from him.

30 Rv 21:5-7
Tue God says: I am the Beginning and the End. I shall give water from the well of life freely to anyone who is thirsty.

31 1 Jn 4:16-21
Wed God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

Jesus Christ, light of our hearts, although there may be doubts in us, you do not love us any the less for that. So we want to draw life from your words: "Whoever dares to give their life for love of me, the Risen Christ, will find it."

Holy Spirit, on days of joy as well as in days of trial, you always reawaken in us a simple prayer at the wellsprings of the Gospel. And you give us peace of heart in all things.

AUGUST

DAILY READINGS

1 Ps 34
Thu The Lord is near to the broken-hearted. He saves those whose spirit is crushed.

2 Rm 12:14-18,21
Fri Do not repay evil with evil. Seek to do what is regarded as good by all. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

3 Tt 3:4-7
Sat When the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of any righteous things we had done, but because of his merciful love.

4 Lk 12:13-21
SUN Jesus said: Be on your guard against every kind of greed; for a person's life does not consist in the abundance of their possessions.

5 Heb 11:8-16
Mon By faith, Abraham answered God's call and set out for the land he was to inherit. And he set out without knowing where he was going.

6 Lk 9:28-36
Tue TRANSFIGURATION Jesus took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face changed. Then a cloud enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud saying: This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him.

7 Rm 12:3-13
Wed Be joyful in your hope, steadfast in hardship, faithful in prayer. Be always ready to offer hospitality.

8 Pr 4:23
Thu Above all else, watch over your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

9 Ps 30
Fri You, Lord, have turned my mourning into dancing. So my heart will sing to you and not be silent. My God, I shall praise you for ever.

10 Rv 3:20-22
Sat The Risen Christ says: I stand at the door, knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.

11 Lk 12:32-34
SUN Jesus said: Give to those in need. Provide for yourselves a treasure in heaven that will not fail. For where your treasure is, there also your heart will be.

12 Jr 31:1-9
Mon The Lord says: I will guide them to streams of water by a level path where they will not stumble, for I am a father to my people.

13 Ga 3:19-29
Tue Paul writes: You have all been clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor freeman, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

14 Mk 2:15-17
Wed Jesus said: It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

15 Lk 11:27-28
Thu THE VIRGIN MARY Jesus said: Happy are they who hear the word of God and obey it.

16 Jn 10:11-18
Fri Jesus said: I am the good shepherd. My sheep will listen to my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

17 Mk 4:26-32
Sat Jesus said: The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed which is the smallest of seeds, but which, once it is sown, grows into the biggest plant of all.

18 Lk 12:49-53
SUN Jesus said: I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already burning!

19 Is 30:15-18
Mon The Lord says: Your salvation is in returning and rest, your strength lies in calm and trust.

20 Lk 6:27-35
Tue Jesus said: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

21 1 Co 12:12-30
Wed Paul writes: You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.

22 Ps 46
Thu God is our refuge and strength, and an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be in turmoil.

23 Ep 4:17-32
Fri Let yourselves be made new in the attitude of your minds and be clothed with the new self, which is created to be like God in justice and in holiness of the truth.

24 2 Co 3:16-18
Sat Paul writes: All of us, with our unveiled faces like mirrors reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the image that we reflect in brighter and brighter glory.

25 Lk 13:22-30
SUN Jesus said: People will come from east and west, from north and south, and sit down at the feast in the kingdom of God.

26 Mt 10:26-33
Mon Jesus said: Not a single sparrow falls to the ground without your Father knowing. And even the very hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid.

27 Si 35:12-14,16-18 (35:14-22)
Tue God is utterly impartial. God never shows partiality to the detriment of the poor, but listens to the prayer of the one who is wronged.

28 Ps 143
Wed I think of all your deeds, Lord, and stretch out my hands to you; my soul is thirsting for you like a parched land.

29 Lk 3:10-18
Thu John the Baptist said to the people: Anyone who has two tunics must share with whoever has none. And anyone with something to eat must do the same.

30 Mk 14:32-41
Fri Jesus said: Watch and pray, so as not to fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but human nature is weak.

31 Zc 2:14-17 (10-13)
Sat On that day many nations will turn to God and will become his people.

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

Second Proposal

LOOK FOR WAYS TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST

Jesus did not teach a theory; he lived a human life like ours. The only difference was that, in him, God's love shone out with no shadows.

Even during his lifetime, many were mistrustful of him: "He is out of his mind" (Mark 3:21), "He considers himself the equal of God" (John 5:18).

No one is forced to believe in him. But believing is more than just a feeling. It is also a rational act; it is possible to make a well-thought-out decision to have faith in Christ.

What makes Jesus credible? Why is that, for two thousand years, he has had so many followers? Is it not his humility? He did not impose anything on anybody. He simply went towards all people, to tell them that God was near.

He trusted those whom society refused to trust. He restored their dignity. He himself consented to be despised and excluded, so as not to deny God's love for the poor and excluded.

We can encounter Christ by reading the story of his life in the Gospel. He still asks us today: "Who am I for you?" (Matthew 16:15). And he told us that he was giving himself to us in the Eucharist.

We can encounter him in the fellowship of those who believe in him, when our Churches are welcoming communities.

Next year, we will look for practical steps to take to help make the visible communion of all who love Christ a reality.

We encounter him in the very poor. Jesus had a special love for them.

"What you do for one of the very least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me" (Matthew 25:40), we would like to confirm the truth of these words of Christ for our gathering in 2015.

We can encounter him when we look to the witnesses who rely on him.

Let us go, alone or with a few others, to meet and speak with a woman or a man whose life was changed by an encounter with Christ.
Or let us read together the life of a witness to the faith: Francis of Assisi, Josephine Bakhita, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa, Oscar Romero, Alexander Men, and many others.

They were all very different from one another, each one with their unique gifts. We should not try to copy them but to see how their trust in Christ transformed them.

They had their faults. But they all spoke to God in prayer, even if some of them experienced inner nights. Friendship with Christ made them free, and in this way what was best in them was able to flourish.

Third Proposal

LOOK FOR WAYS OF RELYING ON GOD

Believing in God, trusting in him, means relying on him. Having faith does not mean being able to explain everything or having an easier life, but finding stability and a starting point.

It means not being dependent on our successes or failures, and thus ultimately on ourselves, but on Another who loves us.

Nobody can live without something to rely on and so, in this sense, everyone believes something. Jesus invites us to rely on God, as he did and because he did. He teaches us to pray "Our Father in heaven."

Silent worship nourishes reflection and understanding. But more importantly, it places us before and within the mystery of God.
Developing "Sabbath" moments, times when we stop and do nothing, offering our time to open a nearby church for a couple of hours a week, praying with others, joining the local Church each week to recall the death and resurrection of Christ...all this allows God to find a place in our daily lives.

In every human being there is an inner life, where light and shadows, joys and fears, trust and doubt mingle. Amazing breakthroughs can take place there.

When we know we are loved or when we love, when we experience bonds of friendship, or when the beauty of creation or human creativity touches us, it strikes us that life is indeed beautiful. These moments can take us by surprise; they may arise even in a period of suffering, like a light that comes from elsewhere.

In them we can see, in simplicity, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

In our day, when many experience broken relationships and unexpected changes in their lives, the relationship with Christ can provide continuity and meaning.

Faith does not cause our inner contradictions to vanish, but the Holy Spirit disposes us to live a life of joy and love.

Fourth Proposal

BE OPEN WITHOUT FEAR TO THE FUTURE AND TO OTHERS

The conviction of faith does not close us up in ourselves. Trust in Christ opens us to trust in the future and to trust in others. It encourages us to face the problems of our time and of our own lives with courage.

Faith is like an anchor that gives us a firm attachment in the future of God, in the risen Christ with whom it binds us inseparably. The Gospel offers no room for speculation about life after death, but it holds out to us the hope that we will see Christ, who is already our life.

Faith leads us not to be afraid of the future or of others any longer.

The trusting of faith is not naive. It is aware of the evil that is present in humanity, and even in our own hearts. But it does not forget that Christ came for all.

Trust in God brings to birth in us a new way of looking at others, at the world, and at the future—a way of looking that involves gratitude and hope, and attentiveness to beauty.

Trust in God frees us to be creative.

And then we can sing with Saint Gregory of the fourth century: "You who are beyond all things, what mind can grasp you? All beings celebrate you. The desire of all reaches out to you."

Messages received for the Rome meeting: See www.taize.fr

The 36th European meeting will be held in Strasbourg

From December 28th, 2013 to January 1st, 2014, the European meeting will be held on the border between two countries, at Strasbourg, a city that symbolizes reconciliation in Europe, a Europe which is open and lives in solidarity. We will be welcomed in Alsace on the French side and in Baden on the German side.

In August 2015:
In Taizé, gathering for a new solidarity

75th anniversary of the Taizé Community
100th anniversary of Brother Roger's birth

Letter from Taizé

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